

OACC Annual Report: April 2016 (For Jan – Dec 2015)

Meetings:

The Community Council met throughout the year on the 3rd Tuesday of the month in the Old Town House. These meetings were well attended by members of the public from our area, our elected city council members, the police, university and student representatives.

OACC was also represented on the City's Community Council Forum and the Civic Forum.

Newsletter and Web-site:

Keeping in contact with our local community is a key priority and much of the year's business centred around reviewing and commenting on community planning issues; Mitchell's Hospital, Butchart Centre Redevelopment, Seaton Park and HMO issues in Old Aberdeen.

Two issues of our newsletter 'The Auld Toon News' were distributed in May and in November. The November issue was largely given over to highlighting HMO concerns and the consultation by the City Council on the need for an overprovision policy. A copy of the City Council questionnaire was included.

Further information on planning issues affecting Old Aberdeen and other local news is published on our web-site www.oldaberdeen.org.uk.

HMO's:

The City Council Housing and Strategy Manager after analysis of the HMO questionnaire drafted an HMO Overprovision Consultation Report. The questionnaire and the report were severely flawed.

However, OACC with the help of our local councillors do subsequently appear to at last be making progress in the implementation of an overprovision policy (similar to the Dundee model).

This continues to be one of our main focus items for 2016 & OACC has joined SUSCOM's to aid our campaign on this.

Butchart Redevelopment:

The University were planning reuse of this building from sports to social. There was resistance to this from nearby residents mainly focused around the application for a drinks licence and late night use.

This project has stalled as spending by the university on capital projects has been halted.

Maybe a good time for the AUSA and the University to step back from this redevelopment and reconsider how best to meet the students' needs and remain good neighbours with long term residents.

Old Aberdeen Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan:

OACC provided input to revision of this document throughout the year. The initial draft document was inaccurate and poorly written. We and other bodies (most notably OA Heritage Society) repeatedly provided input to the appraisal but subsequent drafts would miss out the input. By year end a satisfactory document was published but this was a far more tedious exercise than it should have been.

Policing:

We had a regular monthly report from Police Scotland officers, who are based at Tillydrone Police Station. Our local police officers are informative and ready to engage with local issues.

Seaton Park:

With continued constraints to council budgets it was realised that there was a need for a community body to help safeguard the park and raise its profile in the city and nationally. Since then the Friends of Seaton Park along with the gardeners have worked tirelessly to turn Seaton Park into a park of which we can all be proud. The group held a very successful Cake Fest in Dunbar Hall and the Park Fest (although very wet) was well supported.

Individual planning applications:

Over the year as a statutory planning body we have examined and commented on proposals for local signage, smoking shelters, UPVC windows, bungalow extensions & overdevelopment of houses mostly for letting and HMO purposes. The latest of these was the proposed St Peter Street/Kings Crescent student accommodation.

Third Don Crossing:

OACC opposed the Third Don Crossing but in the end our concerns and those of neighbouring communities fell on deaf ears. It can only be hoped that the council & their contractors Balfour Beatty can finish their works as soon as possible. One part of this plan which doesn't seem to have been widely recognized by the public and by business is the shutting of Bedford Road to all but bus traffic once the bridge is operational. This will add greatly to the journey time from Old Aberdeen to the city centre. This blocking of Bedford Road was highlighted in our November issue of The Auld Toon News.

And lastly a thank you:

I would like to thank all the members of the Community Council who so willingly give up their time to read documents, attend meetings, write letters and distribute newsletters. I would like to thank local residents, our city councillors, the police, university staff and students for their continuing commitment to Old Aberdeen.

Gordon Mutch
Chairman